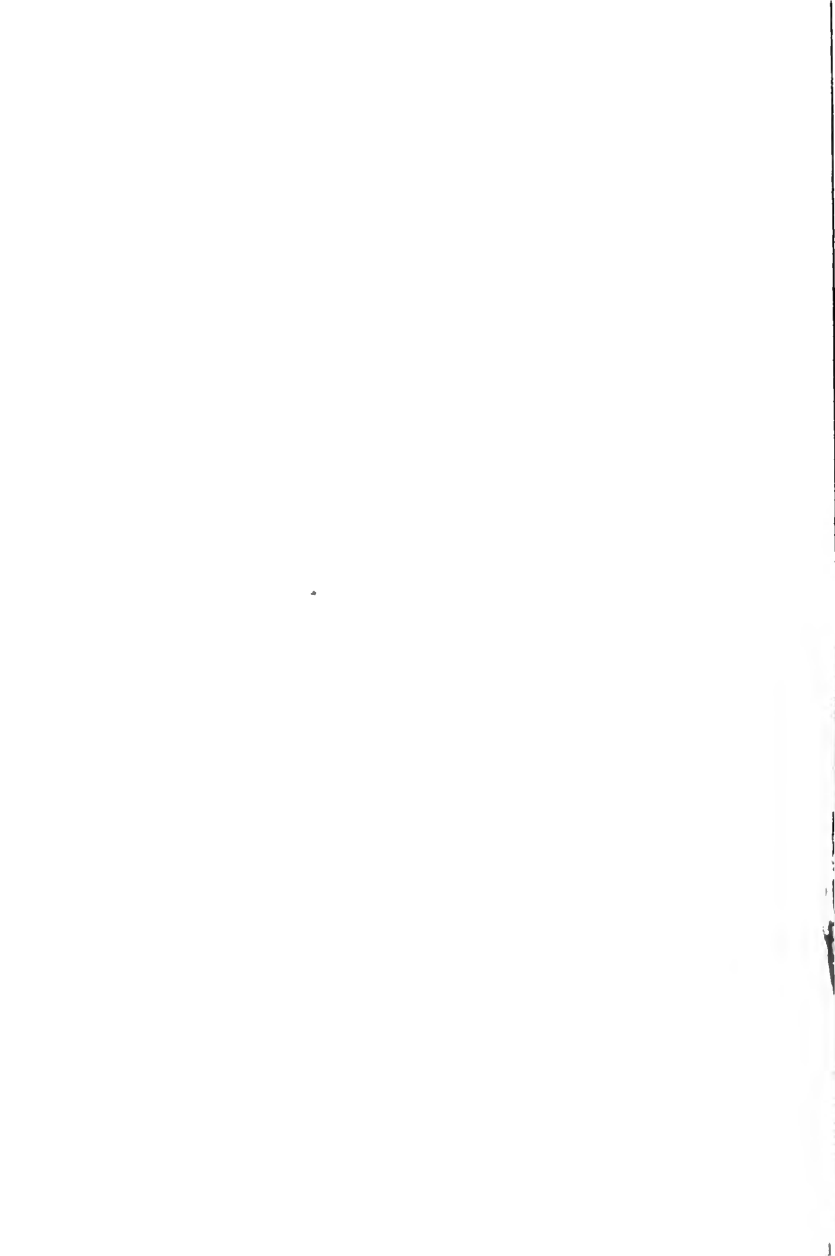


E449

.T17



LETTERS

RESPECTING A BOOK

“DROPPED FROM THE CATALOGUE”

OF THE

AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE

DICTATION OF THE SLAVE POWER.

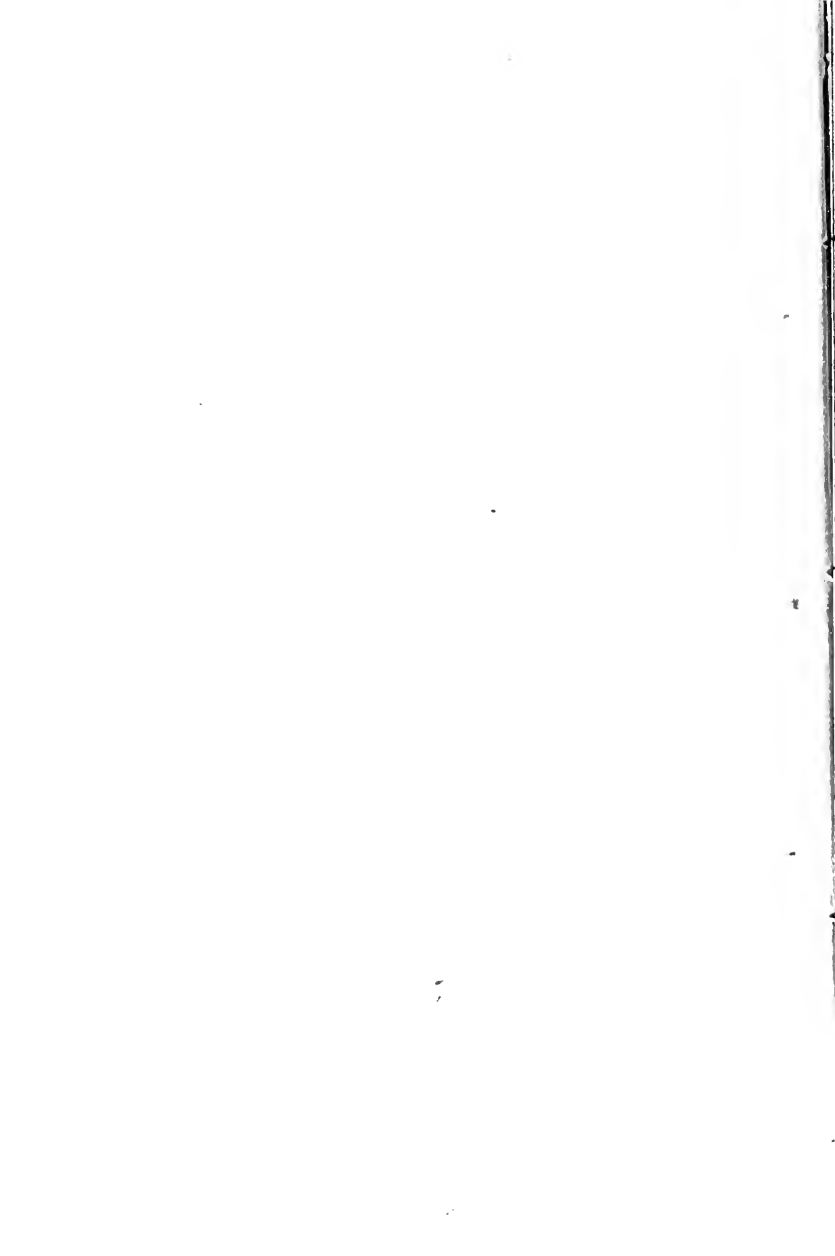


NEW YORK:

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

WM. HARNED, PUBLISHING AGENT, 61 JOHN STREET.

1848.



SUPPRESSION OF A BOOK

BY THE

AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

THE following pages will develop a remarkable occurrence in the history of American slavery, and afford new evidence of the control this "institution" exercises over the literature and religion of the Northern States. In 1832, the American Sunday School Union published a series of little books, containing an account of some of the most interesting persons and principal events mentioned in the Old Testament. They were written in a style adapted to the comprehension of children, and were well calculated to give them a general knowledge of the history of the Israelites, from Abraham to the birth of the Savior. The first volume was entitled "The Story of Isaac, or the *First Part* of a Conversation between Mary and her Mother." Commencing with the call of Abraham, it contained a sketch of his life and that of Isaac, until the marriage of the latter with Rebekah. "Jacob and his Sons, or the *Second Part* of a Conversation between Mary and her Mother," began with the birth of Esau and Jacob, and contained a narrative of Esau's sale of his birth-right to Jacob—of the manner in which Rebekah obtained Isaac's blessing for Jacob—of the hatred with which Jacob's sons regarded their brother Joseph—of their selling Joseph into slavery—of his imprisonment and subsequent elevation to great power—and of the removal of Jacob and his family to Egypt. "Simple Scripture Biographies, or the *Third Part* of a Conversation between Mary and her Mother," contained an account of Moses and Pharaoh—of the Israelites in the Wilderness—of Ruth—of Samuel—of David and Goliath—of King Solomon—of Elijah—of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—of Daniel in the Lion's Den—of the Birth of Christ, &c.

From the above outline, the reader will see that the design of the books was excellent, and that the extraordinary interest with which all children would peruse these stories, afforded the author a good oppor-

tunity for impressing important moral truths upon their minds—an opportunity which appears to have been wisely improved. The managers of the Sunday School Union seem to have placed a high value upon these works. They were “prepared,” from an English edition, “for the American Sunday School Union, by Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet,” of Connecticut, and were “revised by the Committee of Publication.” It was stated in the note “to the purchaser,” that “considerable care and expense” had been incurred in fitting them “to the use of children in this country;” and that, “while all the peculiar excellences of the original English work” were “preserved, some very useful corrections and emendations” had been made. The books were stereotyped, and have since been for sale at the various Depositories of the S. S. U., and are still, *with the exception of “Jacob and his Sons,” the second of the series, which has lately been suppressed!* For what reason? Why is a useful Sunday School book, prepared with so great care, by such a popular and able writer, and published at so great an expense, suddenly dropped from the catalogue of the Sunday School Union? Why are the stereotype plates, lately so valuable, thrown aside, and the sale of the book discontinued? No one who is unacquainted with the influence which slaveholders exert over many of the religious organizations of the country—the imperiousness with which they demand that no word of disapproval shall be spoken, no act of hostility committed against *slavery*, and the servility with which their requirements are met—would be able to understand why “Jacob and his Sons” was so readily “dropped” by the Sunday School Union. No one who is aware of this state of things, and who is informed that in the narration of the sale of Joseph into slavery, a few lines in depreciation of the justice of that condition are inserted, will be surprised by the action of the Union, however much it may grieve him.

After being circulated over the country for sixteen years, it was discovered, a short time ago, by a slaveholder, capable of “scenting danger afar off,” that a certain passage in “Jacob and his Sons” was discourteous towards the peculiar institution! The South was instantly aroused. Newspaper editors, and leading men in church and state, were vociferous in their denunciations of the Sunday School Union, and demanded the instant suppression of the obnoxious book. A Southern Vice President of the Union points out the objectionable passage to the Committee of Publication, who, after an examination of the odious sentences, acknowledge the impropriety of their maintaining a place in one of the books of the Union. The Committee

then discover that "Jacob and his Sons" has other defects, and vote to have it discontinued on the catalogue of the books of the Union! The following printed "minute" explanatory of their action, is adopted by the Committee, and sent South.

MINUTE OF THE COMMITTEE.

As some of the friends of the Society have expressed a desire to know what were the proceedings, respecting the discontinuance, from the catalogue, of a volume entitled, "Jacob and his Sons, or the Second Part of a Conversation between Mary and her Mother," it is thought proper to make the following brief statement.

A few weeks ago, an old and highly respectable member of the Society, residing in Charleston, S. C., brought to the notice of the Committee of Publication, a passage in one of our early books, to which he thought exception might be justly taken. It purports to be a description of the condition of slaves, and though just and true, when applied to some countries, was regarded as neither just nor true, when applied to ours. *This was the only exception taken to the passage, viz. :—that it was not true in fact, if taken (as it naturally would be) to describe the condition of slaves in the United States, and must of course make a wrong impression on the mind of the reader.*

The Committee gave such consideration to the case as they are accustomed to give to all suggestions of error or misjudgment in their proceedings, let such suggestions come from whatever quarter they may.

It appears that the book in question was reprinted from an English copy, nearly twenty years since, when the state of public feeling on this subject was very different from what it is at present, and when such a passage (though as indefensible then as it is now) might have easily escaped observation.

The Committee could not hesitate as to the course to be pursued. The only question was, whether the passage should be so modified as to express the truth (which might be readily done to the satisfaction of all parties concerned), or whether the publication of the book should be discontinued. As it had defects on other and general grounds, and had, moreover, nearly ceased to circulate, the latter course was adopted, and the book was dropped from the catalogue. Had an error been pointed out in any of the Society's publications, similar in its character, but in relation to some other subject (as popular ignorance, intemperance, or religious destitution), the Committee would have felt bound to pursue the same course; and a book of like character and pretensions would doubtless have shared the same fate.

The Committee do not consider the exciting subject of slavery as at all involved in these proceedings. With that subject it is not the province of the Society to intermeddle; nor can we do so, without a palpable violation of the original and fundamental principles on which the Society was organized, and has uniformly acted.

The effect of this "minute" is instantaneous. The South is appeased, and again takes the Union into favor. The South Carolina Auxiliary loses no time in issuing a paper in which they state that "the Parent Society has given the most substantial evidence of its disposition to circulate and publish no work that is exceptionable in its character and spirit to the *American public*." Here we have the whole story of the complaint and suppression, and grieved are we that a sense of duty requires that the history of this extraordinary proceeding be submitted to the public.

The reader will doubtless have a curiosity to see the remarkable passage which was so seriously objected to by the Southern friends of the Union. Here it is:

"What is a slave, mother? asked Mary; is it a servant?"

"Yes, replied her mother, slaves are servants, for they work for their masters, and wait on them; but they are not hired servants, but are bought and sold like beasts, and have nothing, but what their master chooses to give them. They are obliged to work very hard, and sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them; for they have nobody to help them. Sometimes they are chained together and driven about like beasts.

"Poor things! said Mary; but why do they not leave their masters when they use them ill? The other day Margaret left you, mother, because she was tired of living here, though you never treated her unkindly; I wonder that the slaves stay with their masters, who are not kind to them.

"They do not like to be slaves, answered her mother; but they are not permitted to leave their masters whenever they wish. Servants are paid for working for their masters and mistresses, and, if they do not like to stay, they may go and live somewhere else. But the poor unhappy slaves are obliged to stay with their masters as long as he chooses to keep them. And if the master is tired of his slaves, then he may sell them to another if he wishes to."

This is the passage, in full, which gave so much offence to the slaveholders, and to please whom the American Sunday School Union has suppressed one of its interesting and popular publications—prepared

by a New England gentleman who is remarkably free from all "fanaticism" on the subject of emancipation, and whose writings have hitherto escaped the ire of the Southern censors of the press. We repeat it, lest the reader should imagine some mistake, the above is a faithful extract of everything in the book touching slavery.

But it appears that however gratifying the action of the Sunday School Union, in suppressing "Jacob and his Sons," may have been to one portion of the "American public," another portion were not satisfied with it. When it was proposed, at a meeting of the Congregational Church of Farmington, Conn., held early in January last, that a portion of the annual contributions of the church be forwarded to the American Sunday School Union, one of the members objected to such a disposition of their money, as he had understood that a book had been suppressed by that Society, at the bidding or request of Southern slaveholders. The subject was postponed until correspondence could be held with the Secretary of the Union, and the objectionable book could be examined. It was finally resolved to appoint a committee to request a restoration of "Jacob and his Sons" to the catalogue of the Union. The following is the letter of this committee:

ACTION OF THE FARMINGTON CHURCH.

Letter from a Committee of the Farmington Church, to the Committee of the American Sunday School Union.

FARMINGTON, CONN., Feb. 3d, 1848.

FREDERICK A. PACKARD, ESQ.,

and other Members of the Committee of the Am. S. S. Union:

GENTLEMEN:—The undersigned have been appointed by the Congregational Church in this Village, a Committee, to communicate with you upon the subject of your late action, in suppressing one of your publications called "Jacob and his Sons." Our contributions to the support of your Society have been too limited to give us any "visitorial power" in the matter, and it is in the spirit of no such assumption that we now address you; but rather because, while we feel it in a measure a duty, and regard it as for our common interest, that our confidence in you should not be impaired, you assure us in your Circular that you "are accustomed to give consideration to all suggestions of error or misjudgment in your proceedings, let such suggestions come from what quarter they may."

At the annual meeting of our church, early in the last month, upon the proposal of the usual vote, designating your Society and

certain others, as objects of beneficence to be presented to the congregation during the year, a member of the church, not avowedly an abolitionist, moved (for the purpose of bringing up the matter for inquiry), that the name of the Am. S. S. Union should be stricken from the list, giving as his reason the facts that he had learned with regard to the suppression by your Committee of the book named above, and making a few remarks on the subject as he viewed it, from the partial information he had obtained from the National Era and New York Tribune, to which he referred as the sources of his information. By common consent the vote was laid on the table for future action, and our Pastor was requested to communicate with your Society on the subject, and lay the result of his inquiries before the next meeting.

At the adjourned meeting of the week following, the communication of Mr. Packard (having been received during the week, in reply to our Pastor's letter of inquiry) was read, together with the printed circular of the Committee, and the subject again brought before the church for discussion. The gentleman who had made the motion above referred to, expressed himself as satisfied with the explanations given, as did some others who had been in favor of the inquiry. Others, however, felt that the matter should be further investigated; and the subject was again laid over for future action, and the Pastor was requested to procure a copy of the suppressed book.

At the next meeting, a week later, the book was produced and the offensive passage read, also a second letter from Mr. Packard,—and the whole matter again discussed. The result was: a vote, with very little apparent dissent, appointing a committee, to correspond with the Committee of the Union, and request them to restore the proscribed book to their catalogue of publications. The undersigned were by a subsequent vote appointed that committee.

We have thought this preliminary statement necessary to a full understanding of the position and wishes of our church on the subject upon which we are to address you.

It becomes now our duty respectfully to request of you a restoration of the suppressed work to your catalogue—and of course to present to you the reasons which have led us to desire, and we hope may lead you to adopt such a course. And here we will say again, what we have already less fully expressed, that we make this request in no captious and greedy spirit of fault-finding—and in no disposition to find pleasure in the embarrassment in which any such reversal of your own de-

cisions may involve you,—nor have we any satisfaction in proving to you or in showing to the world, that you and other good men, in positions of responsibility and difficulty, may sometimes err. Exhibitions before the world of the errors and failings of the good, are as painful to us, as they can be to the special objects of such unhappy notice; for when one of Christ's members suffers, we all have a common suffering with him.

The date of your action on the subject of the book in question does not appear, either in the minute of your proceedings, or in the letter of Mr. Packard; but it must have been sometime previous to the 21st of last October—as the resolutions of the So. Car. S. S. Union, based upon such action, are published and commented on in the National Era of that date.

It seems that sometime before this, the objectionable passage in the book in question had attracted the notice, and brought upon the Society the denunciations of some Southern papers. The Charleston Mercury (a paper of large circulation and influence at the South), the Cheraw Gazette, and Carolina Baptist, are all the papers referred to, of which we have any certain knowledge. The latter in an article of great asperity and violence, calls on all Southern Christians to withhold their funds from your Society, and the two former “recommend to all Southern men, who by specious pretences, have been induced to sustain this Society, to withdraw from it at once all further countenance and support.”

Whether these violent assaults on the Society ever came to the knowledge of your Committee, or of any member of it, we have no certain knowledge. All that appears on the subject is, that their publication preceded your action (we suppose there can be no doubt on this point), and was the first appeal to the public on the subject. We are bound to believe, from the statement of your Secretary, that if they reached the Committee they had no *acknowledged* influence upon their action, as he denies that there was any yielding to the demands of slavery in the matter. We think, however, that they must at least have impelled the “Vice President in South Carolina” to make his application to you for the suppression of the offensive book—as a *mere coincidence* is hardly possible in the circumstances. How far the Vice President referred to the state of feeling in the Southern mind as expressed in their papers, when communicating with you, and urged the public sentiment as a reason for the suppression of the book, we cannot know until further informed by you; and until such information is

given, or unreasonably withheld, we shall make no unkind presumptions in the matter.

But the question here involved is one of great importance, and upon it depends in great measure the character of the action of the Committee. What was the demand, and by whom made, for the suppression or expurgation of the book? What was the influence, what the power, that has required and effected its condemnation?

In asking this question we do not forget the denial of your Secretary, nor the declaration of your circular, that you did not "consider the exciting subject of slavery as at all involved in your proceedings." Our confidence in your sincerity requires us to believe, that you did not regard the application as in a strict sense, "a demand of the slave power"—nor your action as a submission to such a demand.

But may you not have deceived yourselves? may not the real character of the demand and your concession to it, be far worse than you were really aware of? Slavery has ruled so long in Church and State; we have been accustomed so meekly to do its biddings, that many things which a future age may regard with astonishment, now "overcome us like a summer cloud." When our captivity is turned, we shall be like them that dream.

What then was the real character of the demand made on you for the suppression of this book?

1. In the first place, it seems that the suggestion came from one of your Vice Presidents in South Carolina—who, doubtless, had in a special manner your confidence and ear. Did not this gentleman, though doubtless of the worthiest private character, sympathize with, and in a manner represent the slave power? Was it not in obedience to the dictates of this power, that, after slumbering over the book for fifteen years, he now, upon the threatening animadversions of the public journals, addressed you on the subject? And if the slave power has demanded the suppression of the book *through him*, is it any less a demand of slavery?

2. If your action was not a concession to a demand of the slave power, how does it happen that the Board of Managers of the South Carolina S. S. Union, your own auxiliary, came to understand it so—especially as this same Vice President is probably a member of that Board—and, if he is not, would, almost of course, from his position in the S. S. cause, be in constant communication with them. Indeed, he seems by their resolutions, to have given them the information with regard to the

action of the Parent Society. As soon as your action was reported to these Managers they passed a preamble and resolutions on the subject. In the former they say, that the circumstances in which the book was originally issued, "would if all the facts of the case were detailed, vindicate the Society from any disposition to *agitate* or *meddle* with a topic *altogether foreign* to the design of the Am. S. S. Union,"—also that, by suppressing the book in question, "the Parent Society has given the most substantial evidence of its disposition to circulate and publish no work that is exceptionable in its character and spirit to the *American public*." They therefore resolve, "that the confidence of this Board in the Am. S. S. Union is undiminished, and that the recent action of their Committee of Publication, is a sufficient pledge that nothing will at any time hereafter be issued from the press under their control, calculated to awaken sectarian feeling, or *sectional jealousy*."

These resolutions are published in the Charleston Mercury, and the Carolina Baptist, Cheraw Gazette, and other papers which had noticed the work referred to (it seems then that the clamor was probably pretty extensive), are requested to copy. These resolutions, therefore, express not merely the understanding of the So. Car. S. S. Union, as to the character of your act, but that of the whole South, so far as the subject had been agitated. The journals that had been clamorous against the Society, received this action as an answer to their demand, and these Managers published it as such.

3. If the committee were not aware of any demand of the slave power, nor of any connexion of the exciting subject of slavery with their action, and were all, as the letter of your Secretary informs us, "anti-slavery men in the sense in which that term is understood by the mass of New England Christians"—they must have been greatly pained at the false construction put upon their acts by one of their own auxiliaries, and by the great body of Southern men—a construction that, if true, would imply great moral delinquency on their part,—and they would naturally, almost necessarily, take immediate measures to disabuse the Southern mind of its erroneous impressions. Permit us then to inquire, whether the So. Car. S. S. Union have been re-advised on the subject,—and their misapprehensions corrected. We might almost ask, whether the Managers have been *rebuked* for imputing so base motives and so unworthy conduct to your Committee—and if this has been done, have pains been taken to inform the Southern public also, through their newspapers, or by direct communication with

their editors and leading men, that they have grossly misunderstood your action? Have you sent your printed circulars to the Southern States in any great number?

So much for the demand made on you. If the slave power has made no such demand, it yet, most unfortunately for truth and right, claims your action as a submission to its demand; and while the whole South so regards it, and for this reason rejoices over it, is it strange that we should have our fears excited lest such is its real character, and be deeply moved with sorrow on account of it?

But whatever was the demand, and however made, the book was suppressed—and you have given us in your printed circular the reasons of your action. If those reasons are weighty—if truth demands the suppression, then let the book be condemned—however unreasonably the enemies of freedom may rejoice over the act. In a peculiarly appropriate sense, “*Justitia fiat, cœlumque ruat.*” Let us look, then, at the reasons as given in the printed circular. If they are sufficient, we must be silent.

You say, “It appears that the book in question, was reprinted from an English copy nearly twenty years since—when the state of public feeling was very different from what it is at present—and when such a passage (though as indefensible then as it is now), might have easily escaped observation.”

Now, on examining the book it appears to have been printed in 1832—i. e., fifteen years before the action of the Committee, and its title page reads as follows,—

“Jacob and his Sons, or the second part of a Conversation between Mary and her Mother,—prepared for the Am. S. S. Union, by REV. THOMAS H. GALLAUDET, late principal of the Am. Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, Hartford, Connecticut.—*Revised by the Committee of Publication.*”

Now, whether the book was merely reprinted from an English copy, or was rewritten and adapted to this country, we cannot know with certainty—but must presume from your statement that it is essentially a reprint—though from a prefatory note it seems to have been prepared by Mr. Gallaudet, with much care, and “some very useful corrections and emendations” to have been made.—And who is Mr. Gallaudet? He is known through our country as one of the most judicious, skilful, and interesting writers of Sabbath School books. His name upon a title page, is like the *imprimatur* of the severest board of censors, a pledge that there is nothing exceptionable in the book—and how does he stand in relation to the question of

slavery?' Is he an abolitionist, using severe language to express unpalatable truths?—No, he is well known as a strong and leading colonizationist—long, and we believe still, an officer of a colonization society; and while we believe he abhors slavery, he is the last man, either intentionally or carelessly to use unjustifiable language in describing it—and besides all this, the book was afterwards revised by your Committee.

You say the book was published at a time when the state of public feeling was different, &c. It is true, it was different then, for anti-slavery truths have made wonderful progress since; but it was three years after William Lloyd Garrison had commenced the publication of an anti-slavery newspaper—two years after he had been imprisoned in Baltimore for his anti-slavery agitations—and one year after the New-England Anti-slavery Society was formed.

You further say in your circular, that the description of slavery in the book in question, "though just and true when applied to some countries, was regarded as neither just nor true when applied to ours." Here we must pause and ask—Where, in the name of all that is true, will such a description apply, if it will not here? If we send it abroad over the whole earth, like the patriarch's dove upon the waters, will it not return "wing weary" to our own land as its resting-place and home? What slavery on the face of the earth, in any age of the world, can be found, to which a severity of language can be justly applied, that would yet be undeserved here? We regard American slavery as being as it has often been termed, "the vilest under the sun."

But, without expending any feeling upon the subject, let us look at the prefatory note referred to, in the book in question, where the compiler says, "considerable care and expense have been incurred, *in fitting the work to the use of children in this country*; and while all the peculiar excellences of the original English work are preserved, some very useful corrections and emendations have been made."

It seems, then, that so far from being unadapted to this country, pains were taken to make it specially adapted to the condition of things here; and if such pains were taken, where would they be applied more carefully, than at a point where the revisor comes in contact with one of our "*peculiar institutions*."

As to the defects of the book "on other and general grounds," to which you refer thus generally in your circular, we can say

nothing—as the defects are not pointed out, and we have not been able to discover them on a careful examination of the book; but will merely refer to what we have already said of the compiler and his prefatory note, and the revision of your Committee—an uncommon security against the publication of anything exceptionable.

But all this is but preliminary to the main question, and comparatively of little importance. According to your circular the book contained one indefensible passage—you say as follows:—

“It (the passage in question) purported to be a description of the condition of slaves, and, though just and true when applied to some countries, was regarded as neither just nor true when applied to ours. This was the only exception taken to the passage—viz., that it was not true in fact, if taken as it naturally would be, to describe the condition of slaves in the United States, and must of course make a wrong impression on the mind of the reader.”

Here is the offensive passage—

“What is a slave, Mother? (asked Mary.) Is it a servant?”

“Yes (replied her Mother), slaves are servants, for they work for their masters and wait on them; but they are not hired servants, but are bought and sold like beasts, and have nothing but what their masters choose to give them. They are obliged to work very hard, and sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them—for they have nobody to help them. Sometimes they are chained together and driven about like beasts.”

The whole question is then reduced to this simple one—does the passage contain an untruth? does it contain a misrepresentation of facts? And here observe, the inquiry is not at all whether the master, by law, has the power of life and death over his slaves,—but simply whether it be true *as a matter of fact*, that “sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them,”—and that “they have nobody to help them.”

If we were to go into a discussion of this question with your Committee, our pages would swell to volumes, and our correspondence would impose on ourselves a labor of compilation, and on you of perusal, that would make the restoration of the book by you, or the withdrawal of the request by us, were not principle involved, a cheap compromise of the matter. But such a burden we need not assume or impose. Facts, too well

known to need citation, bear us out in our assertion, which we make with no hesitation and no reserve, that the passage in question states the absolute truth, and only the truth. Hypercriticism cannot point out its error. False reasoning cannot prove its untruth. No construction but one of absolute violence, can give it an exceptionable import. If this is doubted, we pledge ourselves in proper time and place, *to prove*, that “sometimes the masters use their slaves cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them”—and that “they have nobody to help them.”

We will only say with regard to their having no one to help them, that we are well aware that by law it is an offence in many cases for a master to take the life of a slave, and it is in the face of this fact, that we repeat our assertion that they have no one to help them. We will merely remark here,

1st. That by well settled law a master may beat his slave cruelly, even shoot and mangle him (if done to keep the slave in proper subjection), and there is no redress for the slave or punishment for the master (See 2 Devereux, North Car. Reports, p. 263, Case of State v. Mann). Now, if the poor slave is actually killed and not till then, the law (not in reality, but by one of those “legal fictions that work no one any injury”) arrests and punishes the murderer—but does this *help* the poor slave? He is dead, and by law cannot be *helped* until he is so. But you will perhaps say, that the terror of the law conduces to the security of the life of the slave, and thus helps him. We say then—

2nd. That these laws, inadequate as they generally are, from the inadmissibility of black testimony and the right of expurgation on the part of the master, *are almost never put in force.*

We have heard it repeatedly said by men who have lived at the South, that probably in not one in a hundred instances is the murderer of a slave visited by the penalty of the law. Suppose a child has a drunken father—its only parent—a debased, miserable, embruted wretch, who cares nothing for the child and does nothing for his protection, comfort, or support. He is yet a parent, and by the laws of God and man the rightful protector of that child. Would you hesitate to say, that that child has no protector—nobody to help him? How is he better off than an orphan? In both cases humane friends may interpose their offices of kindness—but this collateral aid must be left out of the question to make the cases parallel; for if the law does not redress the wrongs of the slave, we need not hope

that Southern chivalry will ever stain its weapons in his behalf. Now, just as such a child is essentially an orphan—so is the slave essentially, really, to every purpose of protection and redress, without anybody to help him. We might go further and say, that as such a child is in a worse condition than an orphan, so is the slave in worse condition, than if this mockery of justice were withheld, and his real condition laid bare before the eyes of the world.

3rd. The very laws which are claimed as protecting the life of the slave, are intended rather to avenge the insulted dignity of the state, than to afford protection or give redress to the slave. This is evident from these considerations. The free-man, whenever his rights of person or property are invaded, has his remedy in a civil action for the recovery of adequate damages for the injury. The law helps him to this redress. If the case falls within the penal laws of the state, the perpetrator is liable to a public prosecution, as the redress which the state is to get for the violation of its laws. How is it with the slave? The law may sometimes, for the same reasons as before, punish the miscreant that maims or murders him—but he has no *redress* in any circumstances—the law offers him none, intends none for him. If he is cruelly maimed by his master, he cannot sue him and recover damages—though made a miserable cripple for life. If a stranger maims him, an action lies—but in whose favor? in that of the injured man? No, but in favor of his master, who may recover damages for the loss of value in the slave. If his wife is debauched, or his daughter violated, or his house burned over his head, he has no redress. There is no court open for his suit. Justice is brought to every man's door but his. Now, it is just here where the slave needs help. But the law interferes only to defend the public peace—and the protection which the slave derives from this is only incidental, and even where the law is enforced, is extremely imperfect. The slave is regarded as having no *personal rights*. For no injury, however atrocious, does the law give him *any redress*. What more is needed to make him helpless? Would your Committee, and would the Southern censors, be satisfied to substitute for the expression, “they have nobody to help them”—the following strictly unexceptionable sentence, viz.—“for they are regarded by the law as having no personal rights, and for any injury that the master may inflict on them, however atrocious, they have by law, no redress.”

4th. The very law that it is claimed protects the slave, by

its direct enactments, takes away those natural rights which are essential to personal security, and which are reserved to every freeman. So that the slave in our Christian land is more helpless than he would be in the most barbarous age and country of the world, for there his natural rights would be less restrained. A freeman may defend himself if assaulted. He may shed blood, he may take life, to defend his own life, and the law holds him guiltless. How is it with the slave? By law he may be shot, if he attempts to escape from the descending lash. He may be killed, if he lifts his hand to resist the merciless and wanton scourging of a brutal overseer, or if he attempts to resist the violator (the lawful violator) of the honor of his wife or child. It is an incontrovertible principle of law, and has been so pronounced by high judicial authority, that the slave has a perfect right to *escape*—the relation between him and his master being wholly one of force and not of obligation, so that he violates no duty and simply exercises his indefeasible *right* when he runs away; and yet in most of the slave states the runaway slave is pronounced an outlaw, and anybody who finds him may kill him. So much for the *help* that the slave gets from the law.

Feeling, then, as we do, that the book contains nothing exceptionable, that the very passage on which alone issue is taken, contains only the strictest truth, a feeling in which we are confirmed by the opinions of the most judicious men with whom we have conversed on the subject—how can we regard the action of your Committee, but with deep pain—how can we help feeling that a great principle was involved in the question of the suppression of this book, and that that principle was sacrificed to limited views of expediency?

It seems to us that the question whether the offensive book should be retained, was a very different one from what it would have been, had it arisen at the original publication of the book, as a question whether it should be issued, or whether if issued, the passage in question should be modified. We cannot see how the same important idea could have been better expressed, but should probably have expended little thought or feeling on the matter if the book had then been condemned or expurgated. But now, the question arises, (blink it as we will), as a question between slavery and truth—the former demanding silence from God's ambassadors on the subject of their great sin,—an expurgated Bible and an amended Christianity, the latter pleading for the great, pure, and everlasting principles of right. Is it not enough that the Am. S. S. Union issues (among its thousand publications against sin) no word of con-

demnation against slavery? Must they suppress a book that merely and incidentally, in a single passage, with no comment and no note of abhorrence, *defines it*—and defines it too in language no plainer, no more harsh than many a Southern statesman has used in defining it—we might even say, than that in which the laws of the slave States themselves define it?

We do not know that more need be added to what we have said. We regard the Committee as good men in error, deeply, mournfully in error—and since our suggestions have been invited by you, and the letter of your excellent Secretary assures us, that “if convinced of your error, you will as far as possible repair it,” may we not earnestly request you, in the hope that you will accede to the request, to reconsider *your* action in the premises and restore the suppressed book to your catalogue? That book has now a value that it never had before. Its restoration can alone repair the breach that has been made. Like the key-stone of an arch, of little intrinsic value, its removal endangers the whole structure.

While it must necessarily be unpleasant to you to reverse your own deliberate decision, is it not reason enough, to your own minds and before the world, that while the restoration of the book can do little harm at the worst, the whole South have utterly misconceived your motives; and while you regarded your action as no concession to the slave power, they have at once received and rejoiced over it as such, even your own Auxiliary pronouncing it a pledge that you will issue nothing calculated to awaken *sectional jealousy*, or exceptionable to the “*American public*.”

Should you, upon a reconsideration of your action, come to the conclusion as to your duty at which we have arrived, we need not assure you of our hearty sympathy with you in the noble stand that you will thereby be taking—nor of the new interest which we shall feel in an institution which we have long loved, and which will then have new claims on our affection and confidence.

Should you decide that in the circumstances you cannot restore the book to your list, will you permit us in the spirit of scrutinizing, though courteous and friendly inquiry, (and such inquiry we feel it our duty to make), to ask of you an answer to the following questions:—

1. Will you, if you have no objections, give us copies of your correspondence on this subject with the So. Car. Vice President, especially his first letter—and any others that may have passed between you since?

2. Were any of the comments of the Southern press known

to you either as a Committee or as individuals, at the time of your action in suppressing the book—and were they spoken of among you at the time of, or with reference to such action?

3. Have you ever informed the So. Car. Vice President that your action was not considered or intended by you “at all to involve the exciting subject of slavery,” and have you ever communicated with the So. Car. Auxiliary, for the purpose of correcting their wrong impression with regard to your action? Have you given like information in any way to the Southern public generally—and if so, how recently?

4. Have you sent your printed circular to the South in any number?

5. Has there been so general a dissent from your proceedings expressed at the North, as to require the printing of this circular in your defence—or what was the occasion of its being printed?

6. We have ascertained that the condemned book is still for sale at the depositories at Philadelphia, New York, and Boston—and perhaps elsewhere, these being the only places where we have inquired—and this four months after your action. Why is the book, if intrinsically objectionable, suppressed at the South and still circulated at the North?

7. Should your decision have been affected by the consideration of those “other defects,” will you point them out to us? We have the book, will you refer to them by the page?

These inquiries are made in that spirit of investigation, which ought ever to be encouraged, among thinking men, and in a country like ours, and which is in no way inconsistent with confidence and love. We cannot close without saying that the necessity of condensing our argument, has given to it a rigor, we fear in some places a harshness, that were almost unavoidable—and that, if it should make this impression on your minds, we assure you we have intended nothing uncourteous, unkind, or unchristian.

With much respect,

Yours in the bonds of Christian affection,
CALVIN HATCH,
JOHN HOOKER.

Without deigning to make any definite reply to the above earnest and respectful request, made by order of the Congregational Church at Farmington, the Committee of the Sunday School Union peremptorily declined having any farther correspondence with them, preferring, as they said, to correspond with their Pastor on the subject.

At a subsequent meeting of the church, the following resolution was adopted.

VOTE OF THE CHURCH.*

“Whereas, the American S. S. Union in their recent proceedings in suppressing one of their books, called ‘Jacob and his Sons,’ on account of an expression in said book on the subject of slavery, which was regarded by their Southern friends as offensive, have done what we cannot but regard as an act of subserviency to the slave power: and whereas, upon our corresponding with them on the subject, they have failed to give us any satisfactory explanation of their course, and having refused to restore the book, upon our request, to their catalogue of publications; therefore,

“Resolved, That the American S. S. Union be stricken from the list of the beneficiaries of this Church, and that we will seek some other channel for our beneficence to this cause.”

The action of the Sunday School Union had attracted the attention of Christians in various parts of the country, and had occasioned deep regret in the hearts of many devoted friends of the Sunday School cause.† At the request of a person desirous of knowing the facts

* The Committee reported to the Church, February 24th, and, “after a long discussion the vote was passed by a majority, so far as I could judge, of about two to one,” says a member of the Church.

† The following letter we find in the *National Era* :

ROCHESTER, February 10, 1848.

At a meeting of the Wisconsin Sunday School Union, held in Milwaukee, commencing on the 2d of February, Mr. Hopkins, a Presbyterian minister from Racine, rose, and requested leave to present a subject relative to the Parent Society. Leave being granted, he proceeded to read from the *National Era*, dated October 13, 1847, a statement, showing that a volume had been stricken from the list of publications, because a few lines which it contained, descriptive of slavery, had given umbrage to the slaveholders.

Messrs. Hopkins, Holton, and Kennedy, were appointed a Committee to prepare and report, for the action of the meeting, a protest and remonstrance, to be forwarded to the Executive Committee in Philadelphia, relative to its action on the matter.

The Committee reported a remonstrance, which, with some amendments, was finally unanimously adopted.

The remonstrance takes high ground, asserting that, in suppressing the above volume, the Committee had departed from *Christian principle*, and from the *primary object of the organization of the Society*; and it requests the Committee to restore the volume to its place on the list of publications.

Yours,

E. M.

The *Boston Recorder*, in publishing the account of the suppression of “Jacob and his Sons,” appends the following remarks :

“We regret that we are obliged to spread upon our pages the history of a transaction which we regard with mingled feelings of contempt and in-

in the case, Mr. Lewis Tappan addressed a brief letter to the Secretary of the Society, the following extract being the larger part of it:

"I will not, dear sir, keep from you my intentions. The professed suppression of the little book, 'Jacob and his Sons,' and the reasons assigned, first struck me with astonishment, and I have been gathering the facts with the view to publish a pamphlet or newspaper article on the subject. A knowledge of the facts throughout the country, will, I am sure, cause great alarm and grief to all friends of liberty and true Christianity, and lead perhaps to a correction of the evil. *Recently* I have had a considerable number of copies purchased at the Depository in this city, and also in Boston, and this after the alleged suppression or withdrawal of the book! I hear of great dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the Board in other parts of the country, and when the facts are fully known, this dissatisfaction will greatly increase and extend. Why should there be such a bowing down to the 'dark spirit of slavery?' I will candidly listen to any suggestions you may make, for I would not intentionally injure the cause in which you have been so ably and industriously engaged, although it appears a duty to attempt to rescue the blessed Sunday School cause from being used to uphold the accursed system of American slavery."

Mr. Tappan's note elicited the following letter from Mr. Packard, Secretary of the Union, to which Mr. Tappan's reply is subjoined. From these letters, and from what has been previously said, the reader will find no difficulty in forming a pretty accurate opinion of the matter, without any conjecture as to the motives which influenced the Committee of the Union to suppress "Jacob and his Sons."

dignation. Oh! Shame where is thy blush? That Christian men of the North should thus bow and cringe at the despotic mandates of Slavery. We regret that the American Sunday School Union has to bear the blame of this unworthy deed: we have thought much of this institution, and our columns have been freely used to promote its interests, as we trust they will continue to be. Because we love this Society we rebuke it. We trust its members will investigate the doings of their Committee of Publication, and, if need be, remove them from their places. A repetition of this South Carolina affair will darken the prospects of the American Sunday School Union among the lovers of Freedom."

MR. PACKARD TO MR. TAPPAN.

PHILADELPHIA, February 11, 1848.

MR. TAPPAN :

MY DEAR SIR—When I lived at Northampton, Mass., in 1814-17, and indeed for some years after, I was accustomed, once in a while (and always with great pleasure and profit) to spend a few minutes in the little back room of Tappan and Whitney's store, to chat with your aged and venerable father. There was a hallowed atmosphere about that little room; and though it lacked many of the luxuries of a city counting-room, it was the theatre of deeds, and the store-house of thoughts and influences for the good of others, the issues of which will be seen as long as the soul endures. Your father was a shrewd, humble, thoughtful man. I always noticed his habit of expressing his opinions in the form of questions. Instead of condemning a person, or act, at once, he would ask some question about it, as if to give himself time to think. "Do you think it was so?" "Are you sure you know all the facts?" "What does the good book say of it?" &c., &c. I suppose he thought it was sometimes safer to ask questions than to make assertions.

Mr. Whitney was ardent, overflowing with conscientiousness, fearless of man, positive, but full of kindness, and love, and Christian meekness. I would give more to be filled with the spirit of Tappan and Whitney, than for the value in money, of all the goods they ever bought and sold. They are both in the presence of the Lamb, and I doubt not, have fullness of joy.

But what has all this to do with the subject of my present letter? you may ask. Nothing, except that it is just the train of thought which was excited in my mind by your note of yesterday, received just now, and for which I thank you.

As you invite me to express my thoughts to you, and promise to listen candidly to whatever I have to say, I will not conceal my regret that you have decided to publish "a pamphlet or newspaper article" in relation to the subject of the dropping of "Jacob and his Sons," from our catalogue; but far be it from me to oppose it or to attempt to dissuade you from it, if an enlightened conscience, and a sober judgment, plainly declare that God requires it of you. I have endeavored to refrain from those sweeping denunciations, in which some have been willing to indulge, of those who think and act with you in respect to slavery; though my views of Christian duty and of civil

rights and obligations respecting that subject, are, I presume, utterly at variance with yours.

There are few things in the review of my life which I more unfeignedly regret than the severe and harsh judgments I have formed and expressed, concerning the motives and conduct of those whose opinions and proceedings I could not approve. I know of no reason why I should give less credit to your motives, or to your professions of sincerity and upright intent, than I expect you will give to mine. Until I know others, at least as well as I know myself, my judgment of them needs to be very lenient.

But as to the book—I wish you to be set right in relation to the *facts*.

We dropped “Jacob and his Sons” from our catalogue because it contained a statement which our Committee considered liable to serious misconstruction—to wit: *that the life of the slave is placed at the will of the master*. This (so far as our Southern slavery is concerned) was thought to be an indefensible statement. We may have misjudged. I do not remember any previous instance in which any publication of ours has been brought into question in relation to the matter of slavery—we have intended to avoid it as a subject foreign from the purposes of the Society. In our individual relations we hold whatever views, and adopt whatever line of conduct we choose; but it has been our uniform endeavor to avoid plunging the Society into a controversy, which would necessarily divert its influence and its energies from the one, great, simple object of its organization: viz., “*To establish and sustain Sunday Schools, and circulate moral and religious publications.*”

Perhaps we have misjudged in this; but we think not; and the thoroughness with which we have carried it out, is obvious from the fact I have just stated: viz., that this, of “Jacob and his Sons,” is the first instance (so far as I recollect), in which any question, on this subject, has been raised in relation to any of our books.

When we were apprised of the objection to “*Jacob and his Sons*,” our Committee were satisfied of its reasonableness, so that the only question before us was whether to alter or expunge the passage, or to drop the book. There was nothing in its character to make its continuance on the catalogue particularly desirable; its race, as we supposed, was nearly or quite run—and though the like might be said of a score or two of others on the catalogue, yet this being brought specially into notice in this way, and being considered as out of date, the Committee thought it better to cut short all questions of

amendment by dropping the book. This was accordingly done as the minute informs you. Had we attached any particular value to the book, or had there been any reason for taking pains to save it, it is quite probable that a correction of the error would have been preferred to a discontinuance of the publication.

As to its being still for sale, I have only to say, that it is purely a matter of accident. A copy of the minute was forwarded to our agents at the New York and Boston Depository, but there was nothing in it, (as you may see), which embraced or could affect the stock on hand. It has been our custom (as I could easily show you, were you here), when we have discontinued the publication of a book, to dispose of the stock on hand in the best way we could. We have no reason to believe that those who objected to the single passage in the book, had any desire or expectation of its being dropped. The utmost scope of their request was, that if the representation of the relation of master and slave, *to which they objected* AS UNTRUE, were not corrected, the book might not be sent for circulation in the Southern States. The discontinuance of the publication was decided upon by the Committee as the least objectionable course *under the circumstances*, and most consistent with the true position of the Society, and with the principles which have governed it from the commencement of its labors respecting the subject of slavery.

There was no stringent prohibition in the case, such as you seem to suppose had been violated at the Society's Depositories in New York and Boston. The force and effect of our minute was fully expressed in the phrase, "to drop the book from the catalogue"—and neither the force nor effect is impaired by any disposition which might be made of the copies that should chance to be on hand. I beg you would be assured, therefore, that there has been no playing fast and loose in the case, and that what seems to you an inconsistency was purely a matter of accident, or the effect of the custom which has heretofore prevailed in relation to discontinued books.

Since the occurrence respecting "Jacob and his Sons," a passage has been brought to our notice by a *Northern* friend, which occurs in another of the Society's publications, and which, it was thought, might be construed to give countenance to the vindicators of slavery. The passage seemed to the Committee to be susceptible of such an interpretation, and was at once so modified as to do away with any objection on this score. In this case the book was a valuable one, and comparatively new, and in these respects differs from "Jacob and his Sons."

And now, my dear Sir, let me ask you, with Yankee frankness, what good can be attained by any pamphlet or newspaper article, which you, or anybody else, can write on this subject? Suppose you should succeed in satisfying all our fellow-citizens, that the Committee of Publication of the American Sunday School Union have greatly erred in judgment; we will admit (without a pamphlet), that it may be so. Or suppose you can convince all the readers of your proposed pamphlet that our Committee have been influenced by improper motives: even this we will admit to be possible, for though we are unconscious of such an influence, still the heart is very deceitful: what will be the effect of such an achievement? Why, perhaps, many persons will be confirmed in their pre-existing and injurious prejudices against our Society and its great objects; but this you cannot think desirable. Perhaps many thousands of dollars will be withheld from us which (but for such a pamphlet) we might receive—and after all it might fall into no better hands than ours—and perhaps thousands of children and youth, in our Western borders, will feel (without knowing it) the power of your pen in sealing their bondage to ignorance and sin; but this you do not seek. What, I would ask again, will be the influence of your pamphlet? Will it restore “Jacob and his Sons” to circulate again in the Southern States, and under our imprint? We know not that there is now a book on our catalogue, that contains a single sentiment which would be less acceptable to an evangelical Christian in Charleston, than to one in Rochester—to one in Cincinnati, than to one in Boston. We should have said the same a year ago, for we were not then aware of the passages which have been brought to our notice (as above stated) within that time.

Do not suppose that we would conceal or give different shades to our principles on this subject—we openly declare (and ever have done so), as you well know, our desire and design wholly to avoid the SUBJECT OF SLAVERY, regarding it as one with which our Society cannot meddle, without a palpable neglect of the obvious end for which it was organized, and a vast sacrifice of the highest and most important interests that are intrusted to us. We expect this, and all other principles and measures we adopt, will be freely investigated and canvassed. We have no desire that it should be otherwise—but I cannot persuade myself that *you* would volunteer as an *accuser* in this instance, if you are fully aware of the true position we occupy.

You will bear in mind that our action on the subject of “Jacob and his Sons” has been quiet and uncontroversial. We have made no publication of it in any form, neither have

we sought to conceal it. It has been of a piece with our ordinary business transactions, and has, in itself, no unfriendly aspect towards any human being. If our proceeding is made a matter of exultation at the South, it is without reason. If at the North, it is considered as "a bowing down to the dark spirit of slavery," it is equally without reason—nor can we in either case be held responsible for the false views and estimates which are formed of it.

I hope you will believe me when I say that I have no *personal* feeling on this subject—I am but the servant of the Committee of Publication, among whom are as staunch anti-slavery men as stand on American soil. They are not men to truckle to civil or ecclesiastical domination, nor to the erroneous views and selfish policy of any party or section. But neither are they men to persist in error through pride of opinion or stubbornness of spirit. They seek the glory of God in making known the saving truths of His blessed gospel to the coming generation, *while it is yet upon the threshold of life—in the infancy and childhood of its present being.* They do not deny nor doubt that there are many other ways of promoting His glory, as wise and effectual, and perhaps as successful, but certainly not more pleasing to Him than this. These ways are all open, and the means and instruments of accomplishing the good desired, are at the service of those who choose to employ them. You have set your heart on the utter extinction of slavery in every form and degree. It absorbs your mind and energies. The means of accomplishing your end are at your own selection. You have a free press, and a free ballot box. You can scatter copies of "Jacob and his Sons" broad-cast over the land, if you think this would hasten the consummation you seek. But I see no necessity for calling us to your aid in any other form than by letting us inculcate, without hindrance, *every where* (as we do and ever have done), the teachings of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, upon the minds and hearts of our children and youth. You have access to the same minds, in other forms, which you can employ, without putting at hazard other and equally important interests.

I cannot but hope, therefore, that you will, after all, conclude that no advantage will arise from such a publication as you propose, that will at all compensate for the injury which you may possibly inflict on what you justly call "the blessed Sunday School cause."

With the kindest feelings towards you, and towards those who sympathize with you in your views of our course,

I am your friend, &c.,

FRED. A. PACKARD.

REPLY TO MR. PACKARD.

NEW YORK, February 22, 1848.

FRED. A. PACKARD, Esq., Sec., &c., &c.

MY DEAR SIR:—Your letter of the 11th has remained unanswered thus long for want of leisure on my part to make a suitable reply.

After all the allowance that should be made, with reference to your responsible and difficult position, I confess I cannot but lament that, educated as you were in New England, with all the hallowed associations of the Pilgrim State around you, and in full recollection of the influences under which you once lived, and to some of which you allude, you should have yielded to the dictation of the slave-holding interest, and deliberately defend the act. For, whatever apologies may be made, or whatever arguments may be employed, in justification, I think there was a virtual subserviency to the wicked spirit of slavery in striking the book, called “Jacob and his Sons,” from the catalogue of the American Sunday School Union. For one, I had rather a son of New England should not have done it. Many descendants of New England worthies will lament the act, and grieve that it must appear on the page of history, as it surely will. Remonstrances will go up to the Board, disaffection will be felt, confidence will be shaken, and the usefulness of the Board affected. And when inquiry is made, “Do you think it was so? are you sure you know all the facts? what does the good book say of it?” the response will be, I doubt not, “It is even so—the facts are well known—the act is condemned by the Bible—and another bolt is riveted that binds to the earth the poor slave; for those who should ‘help him’ restrain not the hand of the oppressor.” I make these *assertions*, dear Sir, with entire confidence in their correctness, but with sadness rather than unkindness towards you and those associated with you in your arduous labors. Doubtless you all think you are acting a wise, prudent, and useful part—that you are not inflicting a blow upon the sacred cause of human rights—that you are promoting the Sunday School cause, and honoring the Savior. I write to you, therefore, as to one who appears to be laboring under a great mistake, and doing much mischief, while you think you are effecting essential good. Bear with me, then, while I attempt, in a friendly way, to show that this is the case.

You express a desire to set me right in regard to the *facts*, yet it does not appear that I entertained any misapprehension in reference to them. One of the publications of your Society,

in describing the condition of slaves, says, among other things, "they are obliged to work very hard; and sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, and starve them, and kill them; for they have nobody to help them." The Committee of the American Sunday School Union dropped the book from its catalogue, you say, because the above statement was considered by them to be an "indefensible statement." In what respect "indefensible?" Because "liable to a serious misconstruction!" Statements having this liability are not always untrue or indefensible. You do not, it seems, deny that the slaves are worked very hard, that sometimes their masters use them cruelly, beat them, starve them, and that they have nobody to help them; for these are common things, notoriously true, as has been proved by "a thousand witnesses." The only "statement," that is "liable to a serious misconstruction," is, therefore, embodied in the assertion that *the master sometimes kills the slave*, a phrase somewhat different from the "misconstruction" of it, that "*the life of the slave is placed at the will of the master.*" Because, then, it is said in Mr. Gallaudet's little Sunday School book, that the master sometimes kills the slave, the Committee of the American Sunday School Union have, at the instance of an "old and highly respectable member of the Society, residing in Charleston, S. C.," understood to be one of the Vice Presidents, discontinued it from their catalogue! And you, one of the Secretaries of the Society, gravely undertake to defend the act of the Committee, by arguing that the statement objected to by the Southern Vice President, himself a slave-holder probably, is an "indefensible statement!"

Is it not true that slave-holders sometimes kill their slaves? Is not this as well known as the fact that they treat them cruelly, beat them, starve them, and make them work very hard? Do you not know that the slave is regarded as one who has no personal rights? that he is a mere "chattel personal?" that if a slave strikes a white person, even in self-defence, the penalty of the law is death? that he has no remedy at law for injury done him, as he is considered the "property" of the master, who in such case is alone regarded as the injured party, and by whom only damages can be recovered? that the testimony of a black person is inadmissible? that a runaway slave may be killed with impunity? that not unfrequently there are advertisements in Southern newspapers offering rewards for the recovery of fugitive slaves, or *their heads*? that *masters sometimes kill their slaves* without any serious attempt being made to punish them for it? that such a crime makes but little impression on the public mind at the South, and that

punishment is rarely, if ever, inflicted on the guilty person? Then, is not the statement of Mr. Gallaudet, in the book which has been suppressed, literally true, that the masters, sometimes kill their slaves, who have nobody to help them; for although the fact may be notorious, the criminal goes unwhipt of justice? How then can you pronounce it an "indefensible statement?" But you may, and doubtless will, on consideration, abandon the assertion, and say that although it is true that masters sometimes kill their slaves, as the book avers, the phrase may possibly be understood to mean that the life of the slave is placed, *by law*, at the will of the master. This would be better, I think, than to say the statement is really incorrect. But the statement, even in this form, I believe cannot be justly pronounced "indefensible." You know well that if a master should, on his plantation, surrounded by hundreds of blacks, kill a slave or a dozen slaves, outright, in the face of the sun, and these witnesses, he could not, if there were no *white* spectators of the deed, be convicted or punished! The law shields him from conviction by refusing to entertain any complaint from colored witnesses, or to admit their testimony. And in how many ways is the slave, without redress, as substantially killed as if shot by a bullet! He may be excoriated and maimed to any extent short of what will produce immediate death; he may be overworked, supplied with insufficient food or clothing, be unattended when ill, and kicked aside to die of neglect, exposure, and starvation when old! Where is his legal remedy for all these cruelties? Who is there to "help him" when subjected to these calamities? Who? You are a lawyer, I believe, and though your attention has, for many years, been almost exclusively directed to the "one idea" of preparing Sunday School books, you cannot be ignorant that such is the American slave-code. At least you ought not to be ignorant of it in deciding upon the accuracy of the description of the slave's condition in "Jacob and his Sons." Do you not see, then, that the life of the slave is placed, by law, essentially at the will of the master? and that it is equally true as that the master works the slaves very hard, uses them cruelly, beats them, and starves them—expressions to which you take no exceptions? Those who objected to the statement in the book as **UNTRUE**, did so in the face of notorious facts—in defiance of their statute books, courts of record, advertisements, usages; and the American Sunday School Union, in "dropping" from their catalogue a book containing a passage on American slavery, altogether true, and palpably so, at the bidding or request of a Southern officer of the Society, have acted, I think, in subserviency to the slave-holding power, and against the cause of truth, freedom, and Christianity.

You say, *that so far as our Southern slavery is concerned*, the assertion *that the life of the slave is placed at the will of the master* was thought to be "indefensible;" but that you "may have misjudged." Evidently you have; and in representing slavery in other countries as being more cruel than that in our Southern States, you have treated the latter with a leniency which it does not merit. It is an incontrovertible fact that American slavery, at the present day, is the most merciless of any existing on the face of the globe. This is abundantly shown by the slave-code, and the usages of slave-holders. This is not true merely of portions of our country, but is true of slavery wherever it exists in our Union. Having shown you that the statement in the book is correct, and applies with more force to American slavery than to any other slave-system on earth, have I not a right to call upon you, and the Committee with which you are connected, to repent of the wrong you have done the slave in apologizing for the master? Am I not justifiable in strongly appealing to you, as American Christians, to give evidence of such repentance by acknowledging your error, and restoring the book to the catalogue of your Society?

The Society, you say, "has openly declared that it is their desire and design wholly to avoid the SUBJECT OF SLAVERY." Had they originally omitted the definition of slavery, in "Jacob and his Sons," they would have acted, so far as that book is concerned, in accordance with that determination. But when, at the bidding or solicitation of Southern newspapers, slaveholders, or officers of the American Sunday School Union, the Committee discontinued a book, in which a legal and true definition of American slavery is found, wrongfully acquiescing in the untrue averment that the passage is false, the Board virtually acts contrary to its avowed determination, and purposely touches the subject of slavery. Nay, they forget entirely their impartiality, and become apologists, if not defenders, of the atrocious system. I do not say that the Society is justifiable, in its publications, in avoiding all mention of the fact that one-sixth of the inhabitants of this country are slaves, and omitting all condemnation of the cruel and disgraceful system; but I think it certainly cannot be right for the Society to expunge a passage, or drop from its catalogue a book containing a passage—a book stereotyped, and for many years for sale at all their Depositories—because persons implicated falsely allege that it contains an untruth. Much less is it right to become the defender of the Southerner, who desired the suppression of the book, and to re-echo his false assertion that the definition of slavery in the book is an "indefensible state-

ment," though the contrary is known by almost every man, woman, and child, throughout the whole country.

As New England men, and professing Christians, you cannot but know the evils of slavery in this country, and that it is your duty to do all that you legitimately can for their extinction, in the same manner that you endeavor to restrain the commission of other sins. Is it not your duty to deal with the subject as you do with Sabbath desecration, intemperance, robbery, &c. ? Unless you do this, honestly and fearlessly, must you not plead guilty to the charge of bowing down to the slave power ? and confess that instead of deploring the existence of slavery in this country, you are in fact strengthening it ? You are required, I think, while inculcating Christian sentiments, to deal with slavery with as much earnestness and truthfulness as you do with other sins.

The Committee voted to drop the book from their catalogue, because it contained an "*untruth*," and yet allowed it thereafter to be sold at their depositories ! You inform me that it has been the custom, when a book was discontinued, to dispose of the copies that should chance to be on hand, by regular sale at the Depositories. But has this been the case when a book was suppressed because it contained an "indefensible statement ?" an "*untruth* ?" According to sound ethics, would it be right to continue the sale of a book under these circumstances ? And yet it appears that after the Committee had adopted a minute on their records to this effect, they permitted their agents to sell the books on hand ! I notice that you say, "as to its being still for sale," it is "purely a matter of accident," while, at the same time, you avow that no directions were given to discontinue the sale, because it is usual, when a book is dropped, to dispose of the copies on hand. How then was the continued sale of "Jacob and his Sons," after the adoption of the minute, "purely a matter of accident ?"

I perceive in your letter the following remarkable sentences : "We have no reason to believe that those who objected to the single passage in the book had any desire or expectation of its being dropped. The utmost scope of their request was that if the representations of the relation of master and slave, *to which they objected as UNTRUE*, were not corrected, the book might not be sent for circulation in the Southern States." Is it to be supposed that a Vice President of the American Sunday School Union, who really believed that one of its books contained an "untruth," had not "any desire or expectation of its being dropped," but was willing it should circulate anywhere except at the South, where, it would seem, its incorrectness would be most apparent and consequently least injurious ?

What will the friends and supporters of the American Sun-

day School Union, North and South, think of the Southern Vice President who objected to a book because it contained a falsehood, and who was yet willing that it should continue to be circulated at the North, but not at the South? and what will they think of the conduct of a Committee who have endorsed the allegation that it contains an "indefensible statement"—an "untruth," therefore suppressing it when there was actually no syllable of untruth in it, and when the friends of the Sunday School Union at the South were willing it should circulate at the North? Will they not say that this was done through subserviency to slavery—that it is an acknowledgment of the right of the Southern slaveholders to be the censors of the Northern press, and expurgators of our literary and religious publications? Will they not say that such truckling to Southern arrogance is unworthy of a benevolent and religious society, dangerous to the morals of the rising generation, and disgraceful to the nation and Christianity? that the men who will thus act are unfit for the responsible task of preparing publications for the Sunday Schools of the country? and that they should not continue to be the beneficiaries of Christian churches?

"When we were apprised of the objection to *Jacob and his Sons*, our Committee were satisfied of its reasonableness." Indeed! they appear to have been satisfied without due examination of the facts. Had they been anti-slavery men, in any proper sense of the term, would they have been so easily satisfied? Would they not rather have demonstrated to the objectors that the statement in the book was true, and then shown that truth and duty required the Committee to retain it? Instead of this, it appeared to your Committee reasonable, that because Mr. Gallaudet asserted in that little book that a master sometimes kills a slave, it would not hereafter be proper to circulate it! The morality of the Committee is certainly to be commended above that of the Southern Vice President, and those who concurred with him, because they declined circulating one of their publications any longer at the North, after determining to discontinue its sale at the South. Still, the whole affair will be looked upon as a demand of the slaveholding power and an acquiescence on the part of the Committee to suppress a valuable publication, because it defined American slavery, according to the slave code and the practice of slaveholders. The truth, forsooth, must not be published to American children and youth, lest they imbibe a detestation of a system that is upheld by the religion of this country? And the American Sunday School Union, conducted chiefly by Northern men, is willing to lend its aid in this vile scheme!

Will not every one who may have knowledge of this transaction on the part of the Committee of the Sunday School

Union, believe that its Vice President in Charleston, with the editors and other individuals at the South who have shown so much sensitiveness in relation to this matter, objected to the book for touching slavery at all, not merely for falsely describing it? Such has not been the course of the South towards religious organizations or Northern publishers. Make no mention of slavery—take no action on the subject—is the invariable and peremptory demand, and though (as in the case under consideration) the requirement, in order to render it more palatable to the Northern people, may assume the form of some specious hypercriticism, the force and extent of the requirement is well understood, and, I grieve to say, too frequently meets with an obsequious acquiescence. Had the writer of “Jacob and his Sons” more fully described what a slave really is, and to what he is subject—had he said that slavery is a disregard of everything but the interest or passion of the master—that the sacred tie of marriage among slaves, and the holiest affections of their hearts, are mocked and outraged by being made subordinate to these—had Mr. Gallaudet detailed more fully the manifold wrongs of slavery, sketching a more complete outline of the horrors of the slave system as existing in this country; and although no word might have been “indefensible,” no phrase liable to *serious* or *trifling* “misconstruction,” who will believe that the book would have escaped the vigorous assaults characteristic of “Southern gentlemen and Christians” under similar circumstances? Although the printed minute of the Society states that the passage to which exception was taken might have been “readily” modified so “as to express the truth,” the fact is, so much difficulty was found in the endeavor to do this to “the satisfaction of all parties concerned,” that the matter was finally disposed of by dropping the book! The language of the Managers of the South Carolina Sunday School Union shows plainly that “to express the truth” in regard to the condition of the slaves, is exactly what they do not want, and what they are determined shall not be done. They justify a continuance of Southern patronage to the parent Society, on the sole ground that they consider it pledged not to “meddle” with the subject of slavery, and that it has “evinced a disposition to circulate and publish no work that is exceptionable in its character and spirit to the *American public*.” To avoid the imputation that your action has been controlled by the South, you say: “If our proceeding is made a matter of exultation at the South, it is without reason. If at the North it is considered as ‘bowing down to the dark spirit of slavery,’ it is equally without reason. Nor can we in either case be held responsible for the false views and estimates which are formed of it.” It is a la-

mentable fact in the history of religious and benevolent organizations in this country, which receive any support from the slaveholding States, that there have been so frequent mistakes on the part of the South and North regarding their action upon slavery—the South always exulting, with or without reason, that its claims have been acceded to; while those who view slavery with horror have as invariably felt that these religious bodies had yielded their necks to the yoke imposed by slavery.

With the subject of slavery, you say, your Society cannot “intermeddle” “without a palpable violation of the original and fundamental principles on which the Society was organized and has uniformly acted.” Towards what other sins, of which fallen man is guilty, has your Society determined to “maintain a neutral position?” How many other sins besides that of slavery, must you refrain from meddling with, in order to avoid “a vast sacrifice of the highest and most important interests that are entrusted to” you? With the friends and perpetrators of what other wickedness must you be associated that you may successfully promote “the glory of God in making known the saving truths of his blessed Gospel to the coming generation?”

You seem to deprecate any publication of the facts, lest many persons should be confirmed in their pre-existing prejudices against your Society—because many thousands of dollars may be withheld from you which you would otherwise get—and because thousands of children and youth in the Western borders may have their bondage sealed to ignorance and sin. I am not surprised that you think a publication of the facts would prove injurious to the American Sunday School Union, and also to the Committee who conduct its affairs. What then? Shall such facts be suppressed? Ought they to be concealed? Should not the donors, and other friends of the Society, be acquainted with such proceedings? Yours is a Society which looks to the whole country for contributions to promote your object—and ought not those from whom you expect assistance, to know your actions and principles, that they may give or withhold if they approve or disapprove of them? Your proceedings should go before the public from whom you solicit aid. If your conduct is wrong, it should be exposed. It is not necessary to the welfare of the Sunday School cause, or the maintenance of its place in the hearts of Christians, that your action should be concealed. If the course you have pursued has been correct and judicious, why shrink from an open justification? Why ask for silence when you aver that you expect all the principles and measures you adopt will be fully investigated and canvassed? These things are of as much interest to the entire body of Christians in this

country as to me, and they should know them and think of them. Will God be honored, or the Sunday School cause advanced, by allowing your conduct to pass without expostulation or rebuke? Should not the proceedings of the Committee be published, for the vindication of the truth, for the benefit of the slave, and for the honor of Christianity?

You tell me those opposed to slavery may use the press and the ballot-box to overthrow that institution—that they may, if they think it would promote that object, “scatter copies of Jacob and his Sons broad-cast over the land.” The question is not what we *may* do, but what your Society *ought* to do—not whether we may publish “Jacob and his Sons,” but whether you ought to have suppressed it. The question is not whether the book is a needed anti-slavery instrument, but whether the discontinuance of it from your catalogue was not an act of unworthy subserviency to the influence of slave-holders.

Perhaps after the caution you have given me, that it may be more becoming in me to ask questions than to make assertions, you may think my letter unnecessarily severe. I have not meant that it should be, and yet it is difficult to suppress indignation at the knowledge of such proceedings; and such a vindication of them.

You expect, you say, that the principles and measures you adopt will be freely investigated and canvassed, and declare that you have no desire it should be otherwise. I have endeavored to comment on the action of your Committee in the matter of “Jacob and his Sons,” with freedom and truthfulness, but I hope not in a bad spirit. The American Sunday School Union is a great engine for good or evil, and the friends of a pure Christianity, and of free institutions, cannot bear to see it wielded by the slaveocracy of the country, or by Northern men who are mere instruments of Southern despots. “We do not ask that the American Sunday School Union, or any other Society, instituted for a specific, benevolent purpose, should become a propagandist of anti-slavery opinions, but when the subject comes fairly in its way, when it must either keep back a great truth or utter words unpalatable to slavery, but in accordance with the general sentiments of mankind, there can be no question as to its duty. If in its publications, illustrative of the duties springing out of the various relations of society, it avoids all allusion to the relation of servitude, or service, lest it might seem necessary to mention slavery, or treat of the two relations as if they were equally in harmony with Humanity and Divinity, it proves itself at once a coward and a traitor to duty. It may win golden opinions from the advocates of eternal slavery, but it will forfeit the confidence and support of all

independent, high minded friends of human freedom, both in the South and North.”*

I sincerely hope that the Committee will review their proceedings in this case, and restore “Jacob and his Sons” to the catalogue. I am encouraged to hope this from your remark that they are not men “to persist in error through pride of opinion or stubbornness of spirit.” May they feel their responsibility to the present generation, “while it is yet upon the threshold of life, in the infancy and childhood of its present being,” and act in a way that will subserve the true interests of the country, promote the real welfare of American youth, and please the Savior of the world.

With friendly salutations, and best wishes for yourself and those with whom you act,

I remain respectfully and truly yours,

LEWIS TAPPAN.

NOTE.—Mr. Packard, in a letter dated February 29th, objected to the publication of his letter, as it was, he says, “strictly private.” He was reminded that in the first note addressed to him, he was informed of the writer’s intention to publish “a pamphlet or newspaper article” in relation to the subject, and that the correspondence could not, therefore, be deemed private, nor any restriction be laid by one party upon the other as to the disposition to be made of it. The correspondence itself shows that it was begun, not for private but public considerations; either party being at liberty to make use of it according to his views of the requirements of duty. It is, therefore, published as it was written, with only the omission of a few unimportant words near the commencement of Mr. Packard’s letter.

It was desired by many of the church at Farmington, that the whole correspondence between the Rev. Dr. Porter, pastor, on behalf of the church, and the committee of the church, and Mr. Packard, should be published by the church; but Mr. Hooker, in a letter of February 25th, says, “Dr. Porter considered the letters of Mr. Packard to him a private correspondence, and thought it would be extremely uncourteous to publish them against the joint wishes of Mr. Packard and himself. There is no objection to any individual publishing the result of our proceedings, and the committee can authorize the publication of *their* correspondence. Should you wish to publish the correspondence of the committee, and the vote of the church, no objection will be made.”

* National Era.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 839 164 0

Hollinger Corp.

pH 8.5